

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for handling an exception in a business-to-business transaction comprising:
monitoring an internet gateway through which the business-to-business transaction passes for exceptions, wherein the exceptions comprise timer expiration exceptions issued when a sending application does not receive a confirmation within a predetermined amount of time, transaction exceptions generated when content, format, security availability or other characteristics of the transaction are out of pre-determined boundaries, and network exceptions issued when a message infrastructure cannot support the message transaction, wherein if an exception is detected:
using an intelligent contact manager to automatically locate an authorized representative from a hierarchical list of designated persons, wherein the authorized representative is a designated person who has authority to consummate the business-to-business transaction;
using a unified communication system to automatically notify the authorized representative of the exception;

if said authorized representative fails to send a confirmation acknowledging notification of said exception, repeating said using an intelligent contact manager and said using a unified communication system to locate and to notify another authorized representative from said hierarchical list until receipt of said confirmation from any notified authorized representative; and if necessary, automatically establishing a web collaboration session between representatives of the business-to-business transaction to resolve said exceptions.

2. (canceled)

3. (previously presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the intelligent contact manager comprises the functions of pre-routing, post-routing, customer-profile, computer telephony integration, enterprise-wide reporting, web interaction, remote agent support, voice recognition integration, and workforce management integration.

4-6 (canceled)

7. (previously presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the unified communication system comprises voice messaging, email messaging, and fax messaging.

8. (previously presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the unified communication system comprises a telephone call, a sequence of contacts, an SMS message to a called party's pager or cell phone, or incoming calls being routed through a series of telephone numbers based on peer, person, or LDAP list.

9. (canceled)

10. (original) The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of handling exceptions corresponding to demand planning.
11. (currently amended) The method of Claim 10, wherein business-to-business (B2B) processing utilizes ~~the~~ an engine to perform steps of requisitioning, purchasing, approval, ordering, receiving, distribution, payment, and measurement.
12. (original) The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of handling exceptions corresponding to procurement processes.
13. (original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the business-to-business transaction is handled through e-mail and LDAP containing XML data.
14. (original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the exception is handled by e-mail.
15. (currently amended) An apparatus for handling exceptions in a business-to-business transaction, comprising:

an exception detector which monitors an internet gateway through which the business-to-business transaction passes for exceptions, wherein the exceptions comprise timer expiration exceptions issued when a sending application does not receive a confirmation within a predetermined amount of time, transaction exceptions generated when content, format, security availability or other characteristics of the transaction are out of pre-determined boundaries, and network exceptions issued when a message infrastructure cannot support the message transaction;

an intelligent contact manager coupled to the exception detector to automatically locate an authorized representative from a hierarchical list of

designated persons, wherein the authorized representative is a designated person who has authority to consummate the business-to-business transaction;

a unified communication system coupled to the intelligent contact manager which automatically notifies the authorized representative of the exception, if said authorized representative fails to send a confirmation acknowledging notification of said exception, said intelligent contact manager and said unified communication system continue to locate and to notify another authorized representative from said hierarchical list until receipt of said confirmation from any notified authorized representative; and;

a collaboration system coupled to the unified communication system which automatically establishes a web collaboration session between representatives of the business-to-business transaction, wherein the web collaboration session comprises at least one of page sharing, follow-me, form share, text chat, application demonstration, application sharing, and white boarding functions.

16. (original) The apparatus of Claim 15, wherein the intelligent contact manager comprises the functions of pre-routing, post-routing, customer-profile, computer telephony integration, enterprise-wide reporting, web interaction, remote agent support, voice recognition integration, and workforce management integration.

17. (canceled)

18. (canceled)

19. (original) The apparatus of Claim 15, wherein the unified communication system comprises voice messaging, email messaging, and fax messaging.

20. (original) The apparatus of Claim 19, wherein the unified communication system comprises a telephone call, a sequence of contacts, an SMS message to a called party's pager or cell phone, or incoming calls being routed through a series of telephone numbers based on availability and schedules.

21. (canceled)

22. (previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 15 wherein the apparatus handles exceptions corresponding to demand planning.

23. (currently amended) The apparatus of Claim 22, wherein the business-to-business procurement transaction includes business-to-business requisitioning, purchasing, approval, ordering, forecasting, receiving, distribution, payment, and measurement.

24. (previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 23 wherein the apparatus handles exceptions corresponding to procurement processes.

25. (currently amended) A computer-readable medium having stored thereon instructions for handling exceptions in a business-to-business transaction, comprising ~~the steps of~~:
monitoring an internet gateway through which the business-to-business transaction passes for exceptions, wherein the exceptions comprise timer expiration exceptions issued when a sending application does not receive a confirmation within a predetermined amount of time, transaction exceptions generated when content, format, security availability or other characteristics

of the transaction are out of pre-determined boundaries, and network exceptions issued when a message infrastructure cannot support the message transaction, wherein if an exception is detected: using an intelligent contact manager to automatically locate an authorized representative from a hierarchical list of designated persons, wherein the authorized representative is a designated person who has authority to consummate the business-to-business transaction; using a unified communication system to automatically notify the authorized representative of the exception; if said authorized representative fails to send a confirmation acknowledging notification of said exception, repeating said using an intelligent contact manager and said using a unified communication system to locate and to notify another authorized representative from said hierarchical list until receipt of said confirmation from any notified authorized representative; and if necessary, automatically establishing a web collaboration session between representatives of the business-to-business transaction, wherein the web collaboration session comprises at least one of page sharing, follow-me, form share, text chat, application demonstration, application sharing, and white boarding functions.

26. (canceled)

27. (original) The computer-readable medium of Claim 25, wherein the business-to-business transaction is handled through e-mail and LDAP containing XML data.

28. (original) The computer-readable medium of Claim 25, wherein the exception is handled by e-mail.
29. (currently amended) A computer system for handling exceptions, wherein the exceptions comprise timer expiration exceptions issued when a sending application does not receive a confirmation within a predetermined amount of time, transaction exceptions generated when content, format, security availability or other characteristics of the transaction are out of pre-determined boundaries, and network exceptions issued when a message infrastructure cannot support the message transaction in a business-to-business transaction, comprising: means for monitoring an internet gateway through which the business-to-business transaction passes for the exceptions, wherein if an exception is detected:

means for using an intelligent contact manager to automatically locate an authorized representative from a hierarchical list of designated persons, wherein the authorized representative is a designated person who has authority to consummate the business-to-business transaction;

means for using a unified communication system to automatically notify the authorized representative of the exception;

means for receiving a confirmation acknowledging notification of said exception, wherein said means for using an intelligent contact manager and said means for using a unified communication system continue to locate and to notify another authorized representative from said hierarchical list until receipt of said confirmation from any notified authorized representative; and

means for automatically establishes a web collaboration session between representatives of the business-to-business transaction, wherein the web collaboration session comprises at least one of page sharing, follow-me, form share, text chat, application demonstration, application sharing, and white boarding functions.

30. (canceled)

31. (original) The computer system of Claim 29 further comprising means for handling the business-to-business transaction through e-mail and LDAP containing XML data.

32. (original) The computer system of Claim 29 further comprising means for handling the exception of e-mail.

33-35. (canceled)